

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 (ISO) R

66614

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:EBOSWELL

APPROVED BY: S/S-O:PJOHNSON

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P 242302Z AUG 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 201553

EXDIS MIL ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT FROM AMEMBASSY LISBON 4853 DTG 241632Z

ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMEMB BONN AMEMB LONDON AMEMB MADRID

AMEMB MOSCOW AMEMB PARIS AMEMB STOCKHOLM USMISSION NATO

DTD 24 AUG

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S E C R E T LISBON 4853

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE REPEAT TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

DEPT ALSO PASS DIA WASHDC AND USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: ANTI-COMMUNISTS MEET TO DECIDE NEXT MOVE

1. AT NOON 24 AUGUST COL. PAULINO CORREIA, PAF, CONTACTED DATT

AT HIS HOME TO INFORM HIM OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATION:

THE MOMENT OF DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS.

THE ANTI-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES ARE MEETING

TODAY TO DETERMINE THE COURSE OF ACTION TO BE TAKEN.

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2. THERE ARE THREE POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION, ONE OF WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE IMPLEMENTED AS A RESULT OF TODAY'S MEETING.

A. VASCO GONCALVES WILL BE DISMISSED OR RESIGN FROM POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER AND FABIAO WILL BECOME PM WITH ANTUNES AND CRESPO AS VICE PRIME MINISTERS. THEIR GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY FORMED (REFLECTED IN JORNAL NOVO AND EXPRESSO OF 23 AUGUST) CONSISTS

OF ONE ANNOUNCED P.S., ONE ANNOUNCED PC (MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION), A NUMBER OF LEFTIST INDEPENDENTS WITH PRATICALLY NO MILITARY PARTICIPATION. MILITARY JOB CHANGES WILL INCLUDE:

GEN. OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO AS C/S ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS CHIEF OF COPCON.

CAPT. VASCO LOURENCO AS C/S ARMY.

B.G. LEMOS FERREIRA C/S A.F.

C/S NAVY REMAINS THE SAME.

COSTA GOMES WILL REMAIN AS PRESIDENT IF HE ACCEPTS THIS PROPOSAL.

TH HANGUP ON THIS PROPOSAL IS VASCO ONCALVES' INSISTENCE THAT IF HE LEAVES P.M. JOB HE WANTS TO BECOME C/S ARMED FORCEY.

TH PROFESSIONALS REFUSE ON THE BASIS HE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO WESTERN NATIONS AND NATO.

B. THE SECOND COURSE OF ACTION INVOLVES A FIRM DECISION BY ALL THE MILITARY, LED BY FABIAO AND OTELO, TO INITIATE A PALACE COUP INSTALLING A MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND DISMISSING COSTA GOMES ALONG WITH VASCO GONCALVES. THERE IS GREAT DIFFICULTY IN GAINING UNANIMITY FOR THIS COURSE OF ACTION.

C. THE THIRD COURSE OF ACTION INVOLVES THE PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS MOVING TO THE NORTH AND ESTABLISHING A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT; WITH AN ULTIMATUM FOLLOWED BY CIVIL WAR IF NECESSARY TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

3. ALL INVOLVED ARE AWARE THAT CONTINUED INACTION PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF COSTA GOMES AND VASCO GONCALVES. THE PROFESSIONALS ARE DETERMINED TO BREAK THE IMPASSE QUICKLY.

4. THE KEY TO THE ACTION APPEARS NOW TO BE FABIAO WHO RECENTLY HAS GOTTEN THE BIT IN HIS TEETH AND SEEMS DETERMINED TO OVERTHROW
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V.G. AND HIS PCP CRONIES.

5. THE IMPEDIMENT TO SEEKING USG ASSISTANCE, OFFERED BY AMBASSADOR TO ANTUNES GROUP, IS THE PRESERVATION OF LEFTIST IMAGE IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD, PRINCIPALLY THE THIRD WORLD. SOURCE ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE THAT USG ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE BE CAMO-FLAGED THROUGH EUROPEAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. DATT REPLIED THAT SUCH A MOVE INVOLVED COMPLICATIONS OF TIMING AND

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT, BUT WE COULD CERTAINLY ENCOURAGE
EUROPEANS TO GIVE AID.

6. SOURCE STATED HE WOULD CONTACT DATT BEFORE MIDNIGHT OF 24
AUG. TO ADVISE OF THE OUTCOME OF TODAY'S MEETING.

7. IF CIVIL WAR IS THE OUTCOME FABIAO GROUP IS COUNTING ON
RIOT, COMMANDOS, AND CAVALRY SCHOOL AT SANTAREM FOR ACTIVE
SUPPORT. THEY EXPECT ALL OTHER FORCES TO EITHER
SUPPORT FABIAO OR AT LEAST TO REFUSE TO OPPOSE HIM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE201553
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:EBOSWELL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750293-0243
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750822/aaaaatdl.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANTI-COMMUNISTS MEET TO DECIDE NEXT MOVE
TAGS: PINT, PO, (CORREIA, PAULINO)
To: USCINCEUR
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006